

Edna (Loomis) Loomis is mentioned in columns 3 and 4

Cy Grosvenor remembers his days at

The series of NEWS stories about the former Benjamin Franklin High School has stirred memories of the period during which it was built, and of the five years I attended classes in the building.

No, it didn't take me five years to complete the four-year high school course: I attended eighth grade classes in the "new high school." These were held in the three classrooms south of the Wyoming Ave. entrance for several years after the school was opened. The Misses Anna Barry, Julia Kilhullen and Mae Pengelly were the teachers.

When preparations were being made for the construction of the school, shovels demolished the stone walls on Lincoln Ave. and Terrace St., then dug a deep L-shaped excavation around the old red brick high school. At the northwest corner was an especially deep hole where the gymnasium was later to be.

On early spring day, with the temperature hovering near the freezing mark, I stopped to watch several boys poling a raft about the water-filled hole at the corner of Lincoln Ave. and Terrance St. They had nailed together several planks they had found laying about and were having a great time playing Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer.

There were four boys on the raft; one on each side. As the craft neared the Terrace St. side three of the boys leaped ashore. When the raft was relieved of the weight of these three, it tipped and the fourth boy went plunging into the cold, muddy water. He was a sorry sight when his friends pulled him from the drink. It is more than likely that he heard something other than "Oh dear, what happened?" when he arrived at his home.

The new high school was almost completed when Carbondalians awakened one morning to witness one of the most spectacular "torches" in the city's history. The old high school was burning. Setting as it did, atop the rise on Terrace St., it was clearly visible to a good share of the city. Flames shot upward a hundred feet or more as the wooden interior of the building burned. Typewriters from the commercial department came hurtling down, struck the stone entrance steps on Terrace St. and bounded into the street. By noontime only smoking ruins remained.

The new high school wasn't ready for occupancy so classes were held for several months in various locations; Trinity Parish House, the YMCA, and others. It wasn't easy, all records having been destroyed; but school went on.

As do many others, I have fond memories of my years as a student at Carbondale High. It was during these years that the school had the best orchestra in its history. Each morning we marched into the auditorium to the strains of a Sousa march. King Cotton was the one most-often played. It seemed to be Prof. Bly's favorite.

Another march often played was the "Washington Post." When this and "Abide With Me" were played by the band at the memorial Day exercise several years ago, as a tribute to the recently-deceased Gabriel Publano, it brought back memories of the young clarinetist who played in the High School orchestra. In my mind I could see the teenaged Gabe as he played the solo passages of the William Tell overture.

Other musical selections are reminders of my high school days. When I hear the "Triumphal March"

from "Aida" I can see Charlie Melville, Emerson Ruland, Jerry McCabe (the Rev. Gerald McCabe) and Bob York raising their trumpets to their lips to play the fanfare sections of this operatic march.

Not only was the orchestra "top notch" but the teaching staff was of the highest caliber. A more dedicated group of instructors would be impossible to assemble: Harry Coleman, James Crane, Walter Quinn, Leland Brunner, Angela Birs, Hazel Gallagher, Sarah Swigert, Anna Scott, Harry Bender, Marion VonBeck, Dorothy Bailey, Louis Coogan, Mary B. McAndrew, Patrick Murray, Dwight Rude, Minnie Wallis, Edna Loomis and Charles Leshner.

No honors ever came my way as tribute to my scholastic abilities. To label my efforts "average" would be stretching things a bit. In only one subject did I earn 100s: bookkeeping. If my instructor, Prof. Charles Leshner, could have foreseen the career for which I was being prepared - the scourge of taxpayers in the Empire State as a tax examiner with the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance - he'd have flunked me.

A teacher who was a genius at "getting the message across" was Miss Edna Loomis. If my writings display any knowledge of the rules of grammar, it is Miss Loomis who deserves the credit.

It was Miss Loomis who first encouraged me to write, after I had written a composition describing the scene from a high hill, with an unobstructed view in all directions. If dear Miss Loomis had had a crystal globe and looked into it and seen what I would some day inflict upon readers of the NEWS, she'd have called me to her desk and told me, "Forget what I